Beduin, but closely related to the Druses, and frequent the southern slopes of the mountain. They have many sheep and goats, but few camels. The women here came and sat round the fire with the men, and drank coffee and smoked long wooden pipes (kundara).

It is not necessary for me to go into any detailed description of the Druses, as they and their country are well known. We were received well, in fact, effusively, as the English, who have helped them in times past, are very popular with them. At first, when we were mistaken for Turks, our reception was somewhat chilly, but when they found out that we were English they could not do enough for us. The biggest sheik of the Druses is Mustapha El-Attrash, commonly called Abu-Ali. We stopped a night at his village, and he entertained us in first-rate style. The next night we spent at the village of Selim-El-Attrash, who also treated us very well. The latter is a somewhat turbulent gentleman, and is always giving trouble to the Turkish authorities.

The Druses' houses are well built, of black basaltic rocks. Two days to the west of the village of Selim-El-Attrash we struck the railway, some 60 miles south of Damascus. Here we left our camels to come on with our servants and guides, and went on by a native train in a goods van full of Arabs, Turks, and Syrians, arriving at Damascus on February 25. As regards animal and bird life between El Jauf and Jebel Haurn, we did not see so many gazelle as we did between Kabweisa and El Jauf, but we saw the tracks of ibex near Jebel Mismah, and of ostrich in the Aily district. We put up quite a lot of sand-grouse and lesser bustard, and sometimes a partridge, but, on the whole, did not see so many birds as we did on the first half of our journey.

While at El Jauf we got, from Feysul Ibn Rashid, two pairs of horns of the Arabian oryx, which we brought home with us. They are not so long as the African oryx horns.

I should like to add that I have written this as much from Captain Aylmer's notes as from my own, and to express my gratitude to him for letting me so use them, and also publish the map made by him from our notes taken on the journey. I should also like to take this opportunity of thanking the many kind friends who entertained and helped us on our journey.

After the paper, Mr. Hogarth: We have had the pleasure of listening to a singularly straightforward and convincing account of a journey, part of which has not only not been done before, but, so far as I know, has not been attempted. And although other travellers have been at El Jauf before, no one has shown a series of photographs of the place, either in this hall or anywhere in this country, and I think it reflects very great credit on the travellers indeed that they were able to bring back any photographs at all. It is very often said that there is very little to see in Arabia—Arabia is very much the same everywhere; but I think you will agree that whatever was to be seen on that journey, Captain No. V.—May, 1909.]
Butler has seen it, and he certainly has wiped one white spot off the map. One of the most interesting things to me was his short account of that very interesting people, the Sleyb. I do not know that I have any very well-founded theory as to the racial origin of the Sleyb. In their habit of life and their relative position to other tribes, they answer to our gipsies. They are not the least confined to the region in which Captain Butler saw them, but are to be found in very small parties, and sometimes singly, over a very wide area. It is possible that they belong to a stock which was in Arabia before the Semites appeared. Most of the tribes among whom these plucky Englishmen travelled are known to have come there in comparatively recent times, when the Turkish rule was weak, in about the end of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century. There was then a great movement which has left its results in the present Anazeh, who range over the whole so-called Syrian desert, and the Shammar, who range over mid-Mesopotamia. It is also very interesting to have a recent account of El Jauf. I always think the most remarkable thing about the place is that it is in the hands of the Shammar at all, whose centre is so far away in Arabia proper, on the other side of that very terrible desert. Captain Butler said some hard things about the way in which the members of the Rashid dynasty have come to the throne. It is perfectly true that what has been done by its latest members has been done all through the history of the family. But, after all, what has any Eastern sultan done? One hundred years ago the same was done in Constantinople. I should not score it very heavily against the Rashid family, considering how far away they are from civilization, that they still maintain that well-established Eastern custom. In other ways they are a very interesting family. The sultans of Hail form the most purely Bedawi power that exists, and it is curious that with the very small organized force that they have at their command, they are able to maintain control over such an enormous region. It shows how a little organization makes the whole of the difference, and I think explains a good deal in the early history of Islam—the extraordinary effect which very small forces produced in the history of Arabia. I do not know that I have very much more to say upon this subject. I believe that Fortune’s wheel has taken yet another turn, and that the Sultan of Hail has come uppermost again within the last two or three months. He is bound in the end to have the upper hand in Arabia, until some better organized force, whether Turkish or another, is really able to invade his country. Turkey has always had a certain hold over the Rashid family at Hail, and the Ottoman sultan’s name has always been included in the public prayers. I have only to express for myself the very great interest with which I have listened to this paper, and repeat what I said at the beginning, that it is very seldom one listens to so straightforward and convincing an account of a journey which needed not only considerable pluck, but considerable endurance.

Colonel Maunsell: I should like to congratulate the lecturer on filling up another white blank on the map of Arabia. By his journey he has completed the line from Maan, on the extreme left of the map, across to Baghdad. He did not take the exact straight line between Jauf and Nejef, still he explored the country only slightly to the north of it, and confirmed what Huber has already told us about El Udian as a country with a fair supply of water, and consequently of a certain relative fertility. I should like to ask him if he found any traces of ancient communication between Egypt and Syria following a route from Nejef through El Jauf to Cairo? There must have been some communication between the ancient empires of Egypt and Assyria, and it probably followed the straightest road through El Jauf. It is quite possible that as railways have been made through the equally desert and inhospitable country of the Hejaz, a communication might be made between Cairo and Baghdad connecting the two fertile countries of Egypt and Mesopotamia.
Captain Butler: Between Nejef and El Jauf there is a distinct line of communication and wells, but from El Jauf to Maan, although Beduin sometimes traverse that route, there is, I think, no distinct line of communication.

Colonel C. E. Yates: I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Drummond Black's lecture the other day at the Central Asian Society on his proposed line of railway across northern Arabia from Suez to Busrah; and he has also published an article on the same subject in the Nineteenth Century—a line running approximately along the 30th degree of latitude marked on the map before us. I shall be glad if the lecturer will kindly tell us whether he thinks it will be possible to construct a railway along that line. Will there be any high mountains or hilly country, deep wadis or steep escarpments to be crossed, and, in fact, will the construction of a railway line there be a matter of difficulty or not?

Captain Butler: I think the chief difficulty in a railway line of that sort would not be so much from the country, the obstacles of which, I think, could be overcome by clever engineers; but the great difficulty would be safeguarding the line across that enormous extent of country from the raiding tribes of the Beduin, and until either Turkey or some other power has established a firm hold in Arabia, I do not see how it could possibly be done. Water would have to be carried by the train itself, as I understand it is on the Hejaz railway.

Mr. Hogarth: Would water have to be carried the whole range?

Captain Butler: No, because all along the line there are certain wells which the railway could touch, and the existing wells would be improved.

The President: This expedition might serve as an example to other explorers, especially in two respects. It might serve as a reminder to English officers serving in distant parts of the world of the admirable opportunities they have when going on leave of exploring some hitherto unknown part of the world. Such expeditions, to be useful, must be made, however, with a knowledge of how to record what is seen, and in this case I think Captain Butler and Captain Aylmer did as good work as the circumstances permitted in the way of bringing back maps, and their photographs are admirable. This journey illustrates another point, and that is what wonders can be done by courage, firmness, and tact in keeping on good terms with the natives. It is very remarkable the way in which these officers seemed to make friends with all the natives they met with. Even as regards the ruler of El Jauf, Captain Butler speaks of him with a certain kindly feeling, notwithstanding the outrageous way in which he was fleeced by him, and I cannot help thinking that this chieftain, if he be alive, if he were here to-night, would take pleasure in joining with all in expressing our thanks to Captain Butler for the extremely picturesque way he has described his atrocities.

THE COLORADO CANYON—SOME OF ITS LESSONS.*

By Prof. W. M. Davis, of Harvard University.

The Colorado canyon, deeply eroded by the Colorado river in the arid plateaus of northern Arizona, was first scientifically described by Newbery fifty years ago; ten years later it was explored by Powell in

* Summary of lecture at the Royal Geographical Society, March 22, 1909.